xanthoencyrtus is proposed for *S. mymaricoides* Compere *et al.* and *S. indicus* Shafee *et al.*

Type species: *Scelioencyrtus mymaricoides* Compere *et al.*

Neoxanthoencyrtus gen. nov. differs from *Xanthoencyrtus* Ashmead in the following key characters:

1. Marginal fringe of fore wings short, one-fifth or less the greatest wing width; wings finely setose; marginal vein longer than wide; fore wings with a speculum (fig. 1) ..... *Xanthoencyrtus* Ashmead
— Marginal fringe of fore wings long, more than one-half the greatest wing width; wings sparsely and indistinctly setose; marginal vein punctiform; fore wings without speculum (fig. 2; Compere *et al.* 1960, fig. 8) ... *Neoxanthoencyrtus* gen. nov.

Neoxanthoencyrtus mymaricoides (Compere *et al.*) Comb. nov.

Scelioencyrtus mymaricoides Compere *et al.*, 1960, *Proc. natn. Inst. Sci. India,* 26 (B): 46.

Neoxanthoencyrtus indicus (Shafee *et al.*) Comb. nov. (Fig. 2)

Scelioencyrtus indicus Shafee *et al.*, 1973, *Alig. Musl. Univ. Publ.* (*Zool. Ser.*) *Indian Ins. Typ.,* 10: 33.

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24. *SIMPLICIA CAENEUSALIS* WLK. (NOCTUIDAE) AS A PEST OF DRY PALM LEAVES USED IN THATCHED SHEDS IN TAMIL NADU

Recently a peculiar situation of pest incidence was noticed on thatched sheds made of dry coconut and palmyra leaves at Gudiyatham (Tamil Nadu). About 50 huts located in the river bank were severely attacked. The incidence was noticed from November 1976

to January 1977. The pest was identified as *Simplicia caeneusalis* Wlk. (Noct.: Lepidop.). This is the first record of this pest on thatched coconut and palmyra roofs.

Earlier *Simplicia robustalis* Guen. was found to feed on dried *cumbu* stalks, dry fodder of *ragi, cholam* and dry grass in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh by different workers between the years 1908 and 1941 (Fletcher 1914, Ayyar 1940). Further, this insect has also been noted on the dried groundnut, *Thevitia, Dalbergia* leaves and decaying cotton leaves (Agricultural College & Research Institute, Coimbatore, Insect collection). *Simplicia extinctalis* (Zell.) was observed to feed on sugarcane trash (Carnegie and Dick 1972). There was only one record of *S. robustalis* which was found to feed on thatched shed made up of coconut leaves (Fletcher 1914).

The larvae feed on both dried palmyra and coconut leaves used for thatching the huts. Palmyra leaves are preferred to coconut leaves. In between the layers of thatched leaves various stages of the larvae could be seen feeding from the edges of the dried leaves. They are more active during night time. The dry leaves are completely stripped off into sticks resulting in total destruction. Irregular feeding from the edges except the midrib is also seen. The faecal pellets are seen in large quantities in between the layers of thatchings, and in and around the huts. During day time, the caterpillars fall on the household articles, people and their food materials and cause great annoyance.

The adults are small moths with brown wings and wavy lines on the wings. Which lay eggs on the dry leaflets. The eggs hatch in about 4 days. The caterpillars at early stage are very slender and stick-like. The final instar larvae are dark brownish, soft bodied with transparent skin. Head is brownish with a slight constricted neck. The larval period is about 75 days.

The final stage larvae produce very thin silken strands in the feeding area and transform to reddish brown pupae attached to these strands. The pupal period ranges from 8 to 13 days.

The pupae are parasitised by *Brachymeria* sp. (Chalcidae: Hymenoptera) to an extent of 36.36 per cent.

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